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CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!

To the Honorable Clergy, Venerable Monastics, and Pious Faithful of the
Archdiocese of Canada, The Orthodox Church in America

My beloved brethren and blessed children in the Lord,

It is with great joy that Mother Church calls us to glorify God for the loving and personal presence on earth of His only-begotten Son, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

We must, therefore, examine very carefully the life-giving significance of the Incarnation of the Son of God. It reveals to humanity that God is personal for He made His personal manifestation to us as a little Child. It also reveals to us that God embraces us with His unconditional love and He gives us in Christ an example of His love.

God's commandment to love one other is the foundation of our faith, as we have heard many times. True Christian love *"suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails ..."* (1 Corinthians 13:4-8). The Apostle of love, Saint John the Evangelist, says that, *"He who does not love does not know God, for God is love"* (1 John 4:8). Even in today's culture we hear the words of the famous song *"All you need is love, love is all you need"* (J. Lennon and P. McCartney).

God's love for us is very great. We live under His Fatherly protection and guidance every day of our lives. Sadly, not all of His children, whose very existence is a gift of His love, come to know Christ and experience His love in a personal way. And not



all of us give our love to Christ and share in His life, His grace and His other boundless gifts to us. *"Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ"* (Galatians 4:7).

Today all forms of distress confront society. Human life seems to be meaningless. As Metropolitan Tikhon wrote in his recent Pastoral Letter, *"Every day, news reports bring us images of conflict, suffering and tragedy in many places such as Ukraine, Syria and the Philippines. These are images of civil conflict and confrontation of citizens with power (Ukraine); violence and terrorism (Syria); the suffering brought about by natural disaster (Philippines)."* We seem to forget the unity of the Church and love for each other. The Lord says, *"These things I command you, that ye love one another"* (John 15:17) and *"I pray ... that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me"* (John 17:21).

Dear brothers and sisters, I greet you with fatherly love and great joy during this blessed Nativity season. On this great and glorious feast of the coming of the Son and Word of God into the world, I would like to remind you once again that in His infinite love for mankind, the Son of God came down from Heaven and was incarnate, so that we could become partakers of the divine love. Let us all fulfill God's commandment of love and let us raise our fervent prayers to Christ to bless us with a peaceful attitude to one another. May we remember that it is only through Him that we can transcend the corruption and isolation of an existence without love. Only with Him can we cultivate a communion of love among us all. Only in this way will we fulfill the ultimate goal of our life and accomplish God's salvific mission on earth.

Christ is born! Glorify Him!



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